

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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HATCHERIES ARE IMPROVING U.S. FISHING

Fish hatcheries of the Department of the Interior have increased the annual man-days of fishing in the United States by some 43 million since 1950.

Although fish hatcheries had been in use since the Civil War, not until 20 years ago did they really become an effective tool to improve fishing in the United States. The chief difference was selective stocking.

Stocking failures were numerous prior to 1950 because the rearing and planting of fish were inexact sciences at best. The "new look" of the fifties and sixties has come from evaluating species, their needs, and the conditions in the environment under which they would most likely survive.

Other hatchery improvements are better diets, increased research on control of diseases and parasites, better water in rearing ponds and better brood stock for providing healthier fish.

"Today, managers of Federal facilities weigh environmental situations before attempting to stock fish," says Assistant Secretary Leslie L. Glasgow, who heads Interior's programs for fish, wildlife and parks. "The idea is to plant fish where they will best thrive."

As an example, he cited the 1963 stocking of Lake Powell on the Colorado River. The warm upper layers and the shallow bays were found to be good warm-water species habitat, while the cooler lower layers were suitable for trout. So Lake Powell was stocked--by airplanes!--with large numbers of largemouth bass and trout, which became the basis for excellent angling the following year.

The 100 hatcheries operated by Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife are concerned largely with waters on Indian lands, national parks and forests, military reservations, and public reservoirs. As a rule, waters are stocked where native fish are not sport species or where game species do not occur in sufficient numbers.

Both warm-water and cold-water species--from catfish to salmon--are raised in BSWF hatcheries, which benefit commercial and sport fishermen alike. Pacific salmon and steelhead trout from Northwestern facilities help maintain West Coast sport and commercial fisheries. Meanwhile, a hatchery in Maine is helping to reestablish runs of Atlantic salmon in streams along the coast of New England.